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Making The Grade #35: New Coin Arrivals; Plus - Getting My Teenager Interested in History & Coins

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[1 Comment](#)



As the father of 2 teenagers, I have tried for years to get either or both interested in history in general, and in coins in particular. Until now I have nothing to show for it.

My son (now 16) is a particularly tough nut to crack when it comes to being interested in the past. He once told me that any song more than a few months old is not worth listening to. Clearly I have my work cut out for me.

So I perked up when he said: "Dad -- I'd like to learn more about the past. Can you help teach me?"

I was stunned and delighted.

It took a while, but my years of planting those seeds of curiosity were about to pay off big time.

I'm thinking: Father of the Year? Well, I won't rule it out ...

I said, "Heh heh. Sure, son. What would you like to know?"

Archives

- [May 2019](#)
- [February 2019](#)
- [December 2018](#)
- [June 2018](#)
- [March 2018](#)
- [October 2017](#)
- [June 2017](#)
- [May 2017](#)
- [March 2017](#)
- [December 2016](#)
- [October 2016](#)
- [September 2016](#)
- [August 2016](#)
- [June 2016](#)
- [May 2016](#)
- [February 2016](#)
- [January 2016](#)
- [November 2015](#)
- [October 2015](#)
- [August 2015](#)
- [June 2015](#)
- [May 2015](#)
- [April 2015](#)

My son: "I don't get all of the joke references in [the animated TV series] *Family Guy*. For instance: who are Thelma & Louise?"

My ego deflated as quickly as my chest had puffed up. But I must tell you - those 10 seconds when I thought he was becoming a serious student of history were amazing. What a rush!

My son might be a lost cause when it comes to interest in history & numismatics, but I am happy to say I run into plenty of serious teenagers and young adults who do have those interests. It seems to me that there are fewer young people casually interested in coins these days. But there are just about as many seriously interested as there always was.

Our hobby is tailor made for the internet. Coins are easy to photograph, study and ship safely through the mail. There is an endless explosion of new information out there, and you no longer need a \$20,000 library to access it. And because there is now so much raw data out there from newspapers and old books as we digitize all of human knowledge, there are more discoveries being made and yet to come.

My son doesn't know what he is missing.

The "Making the Grade" Featured Coin

1861 Clark, Gruber Quarter Eagle. NGC graded AU58 CAC.

A scarce and historic territorial gold coin, right on the cusp of mint state. \$14,500.

New Listings

1652 Pine Tree Sixpence. PCGS graded AU50.

Colorful and nearly unworn. The date side is perfectly centered, while the tree side has some lettering off the flan, as is the norm for these. \$7600.

1766 Pitt Halfpenny. PCGS graded AU53.

Repatriated by me from the Great White North (a.k.a. Canada), where it resided for much of its life. The coin sports a perfect milk chocolate brown patina. It's delicious, and so good for you too. \$3350.

1811 Half Cent. PCGS graded VF20.

A pleasing, problem free example of this key date. \$1950.

1887 Indian Cent. NGC graded Proof 65+.CAC.

A blue and flesh-red color, with hard mirrors and contrasting devices. \$695.

1910-S Lincoln Cent PCGS graded MS65 RB CAC.

One of the semi-key dates in the Lincoln cent series, this coin is spot free, well struck and retains a large amount of original mint red. Advantageously priced too. \$395.

1822 Bust Dime. NGC graded MS64 Proof Like.

A magnificent example of this key date. Easily one of the finest in existence. \$37,500.

1875-S Twenty Cents. NGC graded MS66.

Concentric rings of vibrant color. Possibly the most beautiful coin on this list, and that says something. \$11,500.

1831 Bust Quarter. NGC graded MS63 [fatty holder].

A very pretty, original coin graded during the first few months of NGC's operations, perhaps in 1988. \$3500.

1832 Bust Quarter. PCGS graded MS63, CAC.

[March 2015](#)

[February 2015](#)

[January 2015](#)

[December 2014](#)

[November 2014](#)

[October 2014](#)

[September 2014](#)

[August 2014](#)

[July 2014](#)

[June 2014](#)

[May 2014](#)

[April 2014](#)

[March 2014](#)

[February 2014](#)

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Categories

[All](#)

Satiny luster under dusky rose toning. \$4500.

1812 Bust half Dollar. PCGS graded MS61.

Light satiny gray luster. A good looking early date coin that I would personally grade AU58 due to the touch of friction on the top of the cheek and bust. Ironically, attractive AU58 bust halves often sell for more than MS61's these days. \$2550.

1822 Bust Half Dollar. PCGS graded AU55.

O-112, considered to be rarity-4. About 40% of the original cartwheel luster remains on this high grade specimen. Not too many specimens of this variety are any finer. \$2100.

1824 Bust Half Dollar. PCGS graded MS64.

Gorgeous original toning. If you were looking for a great bust half for your wildly toned US type set, your search has ended. \$5600.

1827 Bust half Dollar. PCGS graded VF35.

O-124a, considered to be rarity-5. Dusky gray toning, with light gray on the rubbed portions of the design. Many Capped Bust specialists collect 1827 halves by variety, and O-124a is one of the stoppers. \$2200.

1827 Bust Half Dollar. PCGS graded VF25.

O-144, considered to be High Rarity-5. This coin has an attractive "circ-cam" look to it, with even a touch of luster showing around the stars. An important opportunity. \$1075.

1830 Bust Half Dollar. PCGS graded MS63.

Rolling cartwheel luster under light gold toning, with hints of blue. \$1950.

1833 Bust Half Dollar. PCGS graded AU58.

O-106. A handsome coin with strong cartwheel under golden toning. \$850.

1836 Bust Half Dollar. Lettered Edge. PCGS graded AU58. CAC.

Pearly white with booming cartwheel luster. So close to mint state you might burst into tears. \$1750.

1836 Reeded Edge Half Dollar. PCGS graded XF45.

An even light gray in color with hints of luster around the stars and letters. Always in heated demand due to the reported 1200 coin mintage (which is undoubtedly too low, but it is still quite scarce). \$4500.

1870-CC Seated Dollar. PCGS graded AU50.

The first year of Carson City dollars, and one of the keys to the series. This one is crusty and original. \$5600.

1888-O Morgan Dollar. PCGS graded MS66.

Gorgeous green, gold and russet two sided toner, and a better date too. A great value. \$2350.

World Coins, Exonumia, Flotsam & Jetsam

1752-Mo Mexico Half Real. NGC graded MS65.

Mexico City mint. Pillar style half reales in full gem condition are rare. This somewhat prooflike example has light toning on the reverse and is medalllic in appearance. \$2400.

1803 Half Eagle Size Kettle Token. PCGS graded VF35.

Looks remarkably like what it was designed to imitate: a genuine US \$5 gold piece. These were manufactured in Birmingham, England for use as gaming tokens. They are often collected by US numismatists due to their similarity to US \$5 gold pieces. I suspect that more than a few were passed as genuine US gold coins over the years. This specimen has an especially good look to it, with much of the gilding remaining. When you see it in its PCGS slab, you will likely do a

double-take. To make it even more convincing to the unwary of long ago, the "Kettle" signature under Ms. Liberty's bust has nearly faded away from the dies. This item is accompanied by PCGS TrueView images. \$495.

(ca. 1815?) Caracas Macuquina-style One Real "781", PCGS graded Fine-12.

C12. cob-style silver 1 real "781". A very rare coin, and one that is almost never offered for sale. The most recent auction record I could find was an uncertified specimen in the Heritage April 2011 sale, lot # 26132. I quote from that catalog: "This 'fantasy' date was likely produced immediately prior to the standard round type of 1817-1821. What is exciting to the specialist is that the design elements seem to have been carefully located, relative to the times, upon first glance. However, upon close inspection it becomes clear that the lion and castles are randomly rotated, the L-M at the end of the cross is irregular and part of a date (?) is below (or above, as you wish) the cross! Careless work, or just a die sinker who was not aware of the significance of the component elements." That coin, described as very fine but not far from the detail on this coin, realized \$5462 in that sale. \$3500.

1795 Anti-Slavery Conder Token Farthing, NGC graded MS62 Brown.

Middlesex-Spence D&H-1118. A heartbreaking rendition of a man in chains, on his knees. The English were decades ahead of the Americans in abolishing the slave trade, though both countries profited mightily from the "peculiar institution" in the meantime. This example is an even light brown and very reasonably priced. \$650.

1800-NG Guatemala Two Reales, NGC graded MS62.

Fully uncirculated and somewhat prooflike. This would make a great go-with piece for the collector of early US quarters, since these 2 reales were much more likely to be in the pockets of residents of early America than were the infrequently seen US quarter dollars. \$950.



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